

Case study: work tasters

Bootstrap Enterprises

Simon suffers from arthritis. He lives with his elderly father in a mutual caring relationship. After a long career in unskilled work, Simon had been drifting between jobs for a couple of years after a brief foray into a high-pressure catering trade job. His confidence was low although he did have strong motivation to get work as he felt that, as the youngest child, his caring responsibilities had been largely dumped on him by his siblings.

The Bootstrap adviser encouraged Simon to get a Better Off Calculation and he discovered that, with having turned 50, he could afford to take part-time work and spend time caring for his father.

Simon then needed to focus on what sort of jobs to apply for. The adviser worked with him to re-build his CV, emphasising his extensive experience and his loyalty to his earlier employers. The CV was sharpened up to a single page of A4 and also drew on Simon's voluntary experience as Chair of a local residents' association. Simon had left school without qualifications so the CV put the emphasis on people skills and life experience. This process gave a big boost to Simon's confidence as he could start to see how his skills might be relevant to many different jobs.

Simon discussed the option of a work trial or placement with his adviser and agreed it might be appropriate to allow him to change career direction. They worked closely together over a number of weeks, job-searching and making applications. Simon was fairly confident on the computer so his adviser gave him several website addresses to keep searching. The adviser also recommended that Simon keep a file with all the applications and contact details to hand, so that he would know how to respond if anyone phoned him back. This approach is particularly good for older people who may find it difficult to remember details, and Simon was finding up to six vacancies a week that were suitable for him to apply for.

After a mock interview refresher with his Adviser and several real interviews, Simon spotted a cleaning job that came as a work taster with training before the successful candidate would be offered a permanent job. It sounded exactly right! He was able to prove himself in the role and to obtain four modules in Health & Safety before beginning work with hours that still enabled him to spend much of his time caring for his father.